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The President's Daily Brief

24 June 1970

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

24 June 1970

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Israelis appear to be probing the limit to which attacks into the UAR can be carried without provoking direct Soviet reaction. *(Page 1)*

The latest events in Cambodia are discussed on *Page 2*.

North Vietnam is sending additional regular combat units to the battle zone. *(Page 4)*

France is resuming nuclear testing in the Pacific. *(Page 5)*

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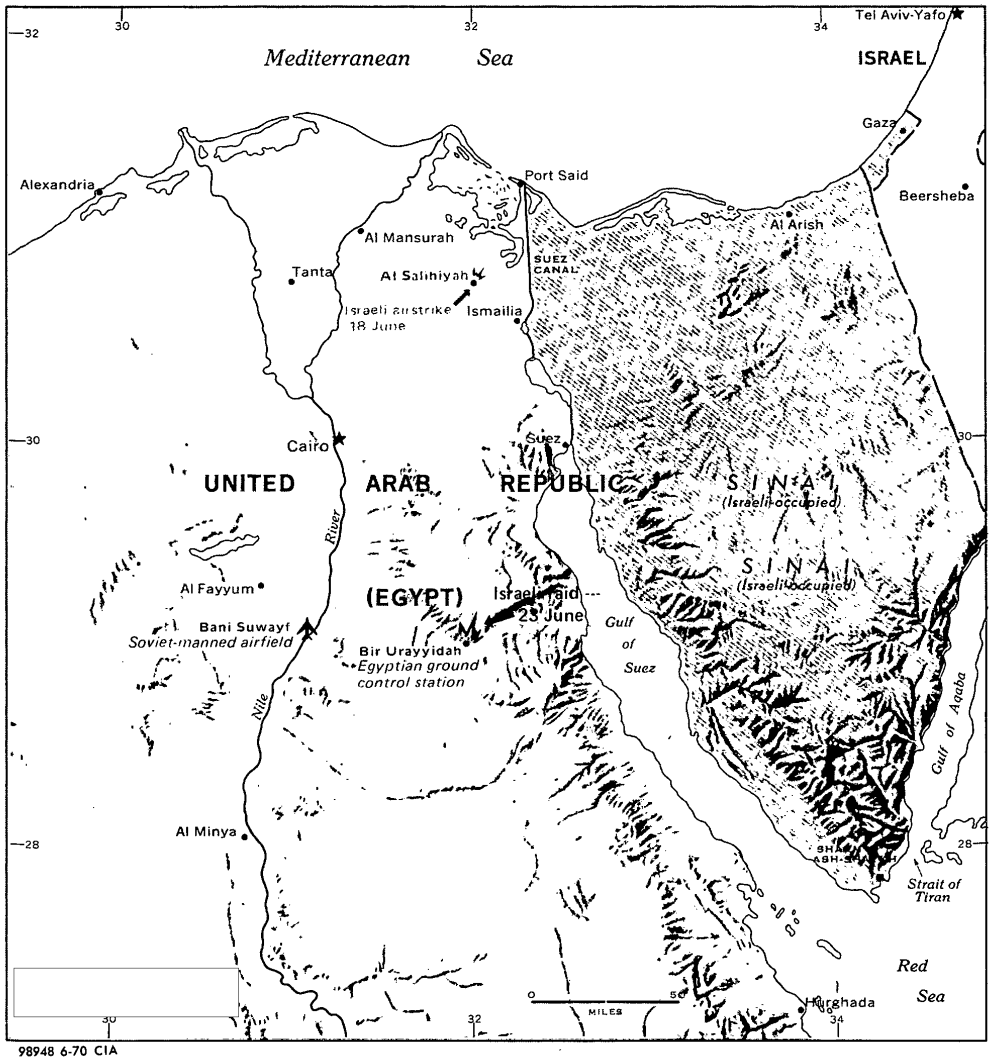
Israelis Raid Forward Intercept Station for Soviet-manned Airfield



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ISRAEL-EGYPT

Israel's night commando raid at Bir Urayyidah yesterday came within 55 miles of one of the Soviet-manned airfields. Bir Urayyidah is an important forward ground control intercept station serving the Bani Suwayf airfield, where Soviet-manned aircraft are based. A month ago Soviet experts were at the Bir Urayyidah ground control station, but we do not know if they were there yesterday

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The Israelis, in addition to maintaining military pressure on Egypt, are probably testing Soviet reaction to attacks in various areas. Last week their aircraft struck at Al Salihiyah, some 20 miles west of the Suez Canal. It lies on the western edge of the zone where the Israelis insist they must have freedom to bomb.

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Cambodia: Current Situation

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CAMBODIA

An estimated 500 enemy troops attacked the town of Prek Tameak, 15 miles northeast of Phnom Penh, on 21 June. Late press reports claim the town has fallen to the Communists, but South Vietnamese marines and river craft apparently are ready to intervene to prevent Communist forces from crossing to the west bank of the Mekong.

The military situation at Kompong Thom appears to have stabilized, as more Cambodian reinforcements are reaching the city. South Vietnamese helicopters brought in 250 troops yesterday and more are scheduled to arrive tomorrow. US Air Force planes have provided air cover for reinforcements en route to the city by truck convoy.

[redacted] the security situation in Preah Vihear Province is deteriorating, particularly in an area near the Thai border which Cambodian forces have abandoned. Villagers in the province are increasingly concerned over the government's inability to protect them. 50X1

Senior Cambodian Government officials say that Samrong, the capital of Oddar Meanchey Province was surrounded by the Communists on 17 June but there is no other information that the Communists are threatening the town. The same officials reported that in Battambang the Cambodian Communists control areas in the countryside stretching from north of Pailin town, on the Thai border, southwards to Koh Kong Province.

Despite heavy air strikes and the arrival of friendly reinforcements, the Communists are still attacking government forces near Skoun. Yesterday, Cambodian troops moving to reinforce Kompong Cham city were ambushed in the Skoun area. More enemy forces reportedly are arriving at Skoun from the northeast.

(continued)

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A fresh compilation by the US Embassy in Phnom Penh indicates that there are now some 240,000 men carried on the rolls of the Cambodian security forces, but barely half of them have weapons. The army of 115,300 lacks weapons for almost half of its members. Many of its units also lack training and have a serious shortage of qualified officers and noncommissioned officers. Cambodian reserve and paramilitary forces are even weaker: 16,000 out of the 19,900 reservists have no weapons, while almost 60 percent of the paramilitary forces also lack arms. Cambodian naval, air, support, and territorial troops, numbering about 23,000, are all said to be armed.

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In the countryside, the peasants are selling pork and rice at a loss rather than lose it to Communist troops. There is also growing fear that the peasants will not plant a full rice crop this season for fear of confiscation.

Prospects for economic improvement appear dim. Eighty percent of the government's income results from rice and rubber exports, from the sales tax on imports--which have been greatly reduced because of transportation shortages and insecure roads--and from tourism, which is at a standstill.

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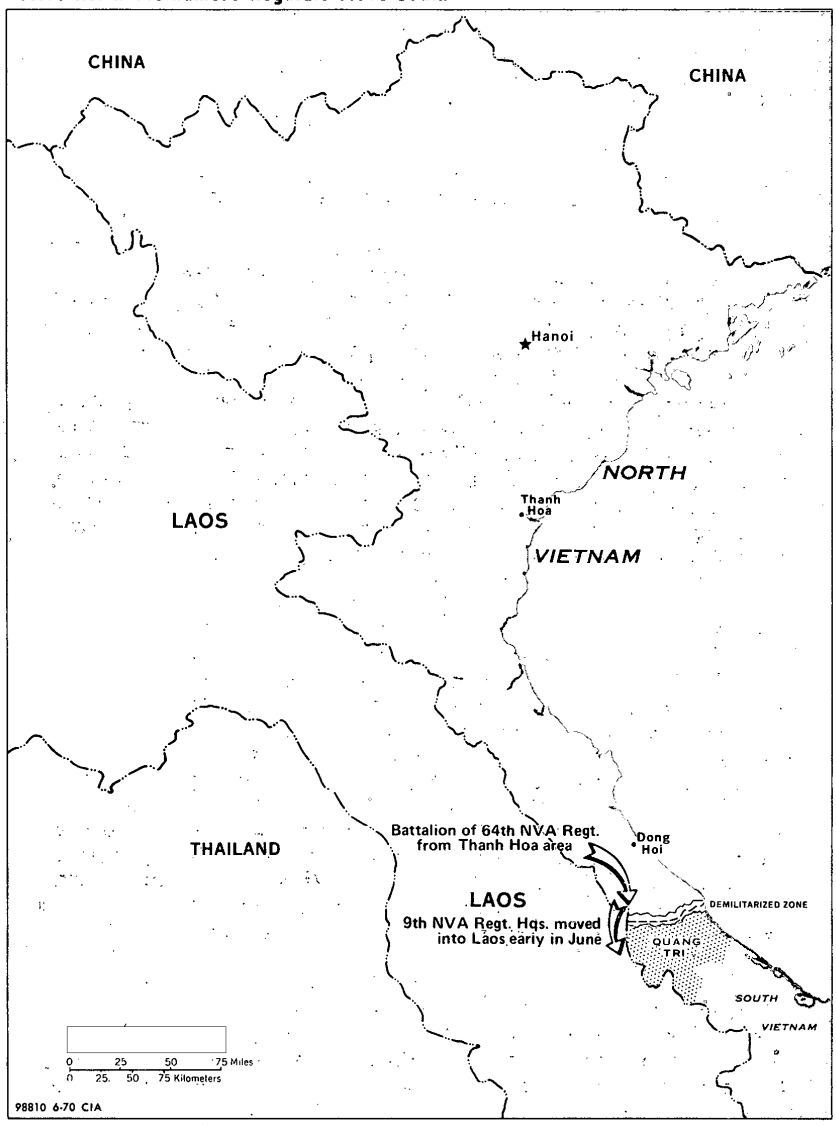
More North Vietnamese Regulars Move South



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NORTH VIETNAM

A battalion of the North Vietnamese 64th Regiment, 320th Division, has recently moved into the area just northwest of the DMZ in Laos. The bulk of the 320th Division is still in the Thanh Hoa area of North Vietnam, but the movement of this battalion--numbering about 500 men--suggests that the entire 64th Regiment may be moving south. Several battalion-sized units detected moving southward through the infiltration system earlier this month may have been from the 64th.

The headquarters of the 9th Regiment, 304th NVA Division, also moved into Laos opposite the DMZ early in June. The appearance of a new North Vietnamese command authority in southern Quang Tri Province since mid-April has suggested that a higher level of operations may be in the offing.

Movements of the 304th and 320th are consistent with such a plan. Hanoi's concern for the security of Communist supply lines and base areas in the Lao panhandle, however, could also have prompted these moves. For weeks now, logistics stations in the panhandle have been preparing to guard against "raiders" and possible allied incursions. The Communists are probably worried by their awareness that some South Vietnamese senior officers are eager to attack Communist base areas in southern Laos. They may well have wind of such thinking in I Corps, for example, where the commander of South Vietnam's 2nd Division recently said he has been planning to conduct an operation into Laos, although he admitted he does not have the required approval from Saigon.

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NOTE

France: Nuclear testing in the Pacific is scheduled to resume today, following a pause of almost a month since the conclusion of the first group of three tests.

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